

Srimad Bhagavatam

An attempt to understand

Bharat Bhushan

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Is human oneness possible?

Can we imagine a global society at peace with itself? Is it possible? It was so presumed that it could be possible. I do not mean the Woodstock leftovers or the pacifists that spring up each time there is an anti-fundamentalist wave. Of course, there have been several pathfinders, holy men, preachers, seers and visionaries who have propounded the idea of a common path, a common view of peace, of equality and of equanimity. There have been great visionaries, including those who are now venerated as Saints or Gods, if so. These visionaries, saints or Gods, if you please, have but spoken of one-world, one-people, and one-community.

Can people be at peace with each other? Can we stop fighting? Can there be a human oneness that is not limited by small communities,

states, nations or race? Can caste or class or wealth divisions cease to exist? There was indeed such a vision that began to express the possibility of such human oneness. The vision expressed the hope, it explored the divisions, it explained the contradictions and drawing from its times, presented parallels of the ideas within various stories and bridged the space between humans and gods to bring together the possibility of being at peace. A world that understood itself, and a world that tolerated the evil, and allowed the truth to prevail without having to bring forth a concept that humanity were evil. Truth was expressed as being free from the concept of time and space, of events and reality, and therefore it proposed, that if truth was free from reality, then there could be no perspective of the existence of evil in human society.

The Srimad Bhagavatam, the age-old treatise of all that is India, presented for the first time perhaps, that there could be a global oneness of humanity that could bring together the energy of all living beings, and synergise the very concept of life beyond the finiteness of death. Human beings are always in search of an opportunity and a vision to live at peace. Even those at war, and

those planning to go ahead with violence and death, would also wish for peace, if their concepts of religion, god, caste, wealth divisions, land ownership, water shares and power were to cease. Can this be possible? What did the Srimad Bhagavatam speak of, that one can perhaps perceive that such an impossibility could indeed perhaps, be possible?

But the Srimad Bhagavatam was of an age long long gone. How can the current world benefit from it? The world is a very different place from when the Srimad Bhagavatam was first told. We do not use bows and arrows in a war, and neither do we use elephants or rakshasas in warfare. We do not ride in chariots and neither do our warriors use magic or tantra to wage war or achieve victory. Kings are no longer commonplace, and they do not run their kingdoms. The geography has changed since then. The Mount Kailasa is in China. The very abodes of the gods of ancient India are no longer in India. They are in China. There certainly is a form of oneness in China, that of communism. India has a great sense of power and being from its diversity. We have planes, Internet, cell phones, laser communications, satellites and rockets moving around, and a

great worldwide sense of movement, dynamism, growth and prosperity.

There is also more war nowadays, far removed from the times of the Srimad Bhagavat. We are now much better and more destructive with it. War has also become technologically accurate. Fast flying stealth bombers can take out the exact target building and not cause destruction to its adjacent structures. Atom bombs or H-bombs or plutonium bombs are not so particular about choosing any single structure to destroy. Not at all. For these new age weapons, an entire city or a region is not sufficient. The time it takes to read, understand and practice the tenets expounded in the Srimad Bhagavat is extensive. One needs to learn about simpler and more closer aspects of ones' own life than to become a Sadhu or a Seer and immerse oneself completely in the Srimad Bhagavat.

The war between the individual and the mind...

However, the greater war, the greater destruction and the greater peace and understanding are far removed from situations between human beings, communities, religions or nations. The larger war being fought nowadays is within oneself, within one's mind and within ones' own understanding of life, death and peace and happiness. The war within ones' mind, the war that is seen within a loved one's mind, the war that is perceived within a hated persons' mind, and the war that creates evil and hate and sorrow from within an evil persons mind is far more destructive than the war that exists between nations, communities and castes and religion.

Why would it be so? The war between nations has a geographical boundary. It is fought over a finite objective. It can be completed. The war can be called off. There can be peace. War between communities ceases to exist after a while once various goals are achieved. Religion and caste wars are known to continue for centuries, while the human self is existent for less than hundred years at any time. Why does it persist then? Because there are self-styled individuals who emerge from time to time, to guarantee

themselves some space where there are other individuals who would be willing to listen, to surrender and to act on the bidding of those who would wish to sell hate and evil rather than to disseminate peace and love.

The war within ones' own mind has no boundaries, no objectives, goals or sense of time or proportion. The weapons are quite simple and complex. The most dangerous weapon that human beings use in fighting with others is to draw out memories from within ones' mind. Old memories, long gone, and long over. Old memories that are brought out from the deep recesses of ones' mind, can be intermixed with current events and made to look new. And old arguments can be strengthened and revitalized to begin new fights. These negativities build up among small families, extend to neighbours, friends and communities and persist. When memories are used to bring up arguments, the seeds of evil are sown.

The mind has a good weapon to fight the evil of memory. Few people use it. Most people do not allow the few to use this weapon. This weapon is 'forgiveness'. To forgive is more powerful than to remember. Usually, the weapon of 'forgiveness' is mistakenly

coupled with the aspect of 'forgetfulness' and therefore, the adage, 'forgive and forget' or 'forget and forgive'. These wars drawn out from deep inner recesses of ones' minds extend to stay on as a constant companion. And, in spite of all the growth and advancement of human society and nations, the individual human being is constantly at a loss to accept the frailty of one's own nature, to accept the condition of the mind of one's loved ones and those with evil in their minds.

Humanity is comprised of individuals. And each individual is at war with oneself and with others in close proximity. These aspects that deny love, peace, humility, forgiveness and growth are drawn from the same seed. The individual needs to become at peace with oneself first and is required to wage war within oneself and then extend this knowledge to others. Srimad Bhagavat, the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible and the Tipitaka, among all other sacred books of knowledge, thought and understanding of the oneness of all peoples, cannot serve their purpose if the individual chooses to continue to fight within oneself, without achieving oneness with ones' own mind. It is this war that is more complex, and more troublesome. For it is the war that is so very near to oneself,

always traveling with the person, and getting to be heavier and heavier with each passing incident and days and months.

There are many terms and definitions and methods that explain ways and means of fighting the war within ones' own mind. Theories and hypotheses abound in the manner in which every knowing mind, or curious individual or persistent seer has observed and understood the war between an individual and ones' mind. Does the mind flow into the spirit? Is the mind actually the soul? Does the soul and mind continue to exist when the body does not? These questions are but tangents to divert the person into more convenient pastures rather than to win the war with ones' own mind to achieve peace, love, humility, forgiveness and understanding.

That which is learnt, for example, from within schools, colleges, workplaces, travel and from the new rapidly spreading world of learning about and training the body to manage ones' own stress and relaxation techniques are but random inputs of knowledge. It is the understanding of the great ones', from among those who understood the very basis of humanity and taught others, that one

should absorb without having to struggle through a forest of confusion. The evils of memories, temptation, anger, enmity and falsehood are but the smaller demonic faces of what an individual represents of society. It is this nature of the individual that requires a requiem with ones' own mind and that requires deliberate approaches to bring forth equanimity and love and affection.

Is there a God out there, somewhere...?

Why is there inequality in humanity? Why do people hate each other and kill each other? If there was a God out there, somewhere, and if God made people in his own image, then why do people kill each other, deny equal rights and take away from others that which is not their own? Why do people cause so much sorrow, so much tragedy and so many traumas that destroy communities, cities, villages and nations? Why could God be so selfish that humans have to have faith in God and godliness, and be ethical and have good principles? Why would God create evil and hate? There is something wrong in all these perspectives. When one ponders and

thinks this out in detail, one begins to doubt, if at all, is there a God out there, somewhere?

There is reality, and that is the reality of creation. We exist. All living beings exist. And all non-living beings also exist. There is existence where humanity has not as yet discovered any signs of life, as we know now. The planets and their satellite moons, the asteroids, and the very many solar systems out there, they are all in existence. These objects in space have movement, and repetition in their movement in very specific patterns in time. This is also a form of life, however not in the manner of living beings that we are and the other living beings with whom we live on this planet. As long as we do not know how did all these objects in space come to be in the first place, and as long as we do not know exactly how life as we know of living beings on this planet came to be, we maintain our faith in the reality of God and godliness.

And if we maintain our faith in the reality of God and if we exist as living beings, we need to recognize the need to exist within a set of principles, adopt a model code of ethics and live with other living beings, apart from humans, in an established approach of “live and

let live”. Good principles of co-existence of humans with other humans do not mean that humanity would live in exclusion of plants and animals. Seeking closer proximity to understanding God and godliness requires human beings to also cohabit with plants and animals in a manner of conserving natural habitats that are the abode of all living beings. All living beings and their habitats on this planet emanate from the reality of God, and thus, is this reality maintained and reunited when they cease to exist. Is this just another theory of saying that all energy continues to exist, and only converts from one form to another? There is never any closure, only transitions?

Science, scientists, rationalists, atheists, heretics and they who deny humans their right to choose their religion and god have all denied the reality of God and godliness in their own manners of theories and denial. Not all science and not all scientists have done so, however. Similarly have all these various denial groups have been in search of God with the arrogance of denial rather than of acceptance, and have thereby been denied of the glory of godliness. And that has been their tragedy. Would that have been so, it is but also the amazing and enormous panorama of God and

humanity on this planet, that has not been seen from their very own eyes, when it is in front of them, and they are part of its existence.

There is energy, and energy is always in transition. Human beings, plants and animals, their habitats, the water, the clouds and the atmosphere, the soil and its hills and mountains are all but mere receptacles of energy for a certain period of time in different forms and aspects. There is a need to explain the source of energy, and there is a need to search for it. And the completeness and totality of energy, and the understanding that all living beings are but transient retainers in their creation is to accept God and godliness for humanity and all that is living.

There is but one ultimate source, and all that is, all that exists, and all that will cease to exist, emanates from and returns to this one ultimate source. This one source and final resting point of all energy is God, and this is the splendid treatise of the Srimad Bhagavatam. And the reality of inequality in humanity, and the manner of evil and good, of truth and falsehood, of hate and love, of sharing and giving, of equality and equanimity, of

understanding the enormity of ethics and principles within humanity, is the authority of the Srimad Bhagavatam.

The Puranas as records of transcendental science?

There were no computers out there in those ages. And, there were no typewriters or paper. So, how would one remember all that was to know and to learn? Maharishi Veda Vyas was the source of knowledge. He brought together all the knowledge that was known at that time, and on many occasions, he was part of the process also, as in the Mahabharata. Children and adults in the 21st century have many other sources of knowledge, including the internet, television, books and newspapers and movies. We are able to source knowledge, certainly, but do we remember what we see or read or hear about? Do we understand and analyse and choose between the good and the bad, the truth and the untruth, the evil and the pure, the sincere and the conspiracy, the prospects of peace and the possibility of war? Do we practise the ethics and principles of good, of purity, of humanity? Or, do we choose hate over love?

How do we understand these principles in what happens to us in our lives?

The only manner, in which people remember what was told to them, or what was meant for them to remember, is to tell a story. And that is what Maharishi Veda Vyas did through the Puranas, the Srimad Bhagavatam and the Mahabharata. Tell me honestly, would you have bothered to know about the good and the bad, the evil and the pure, peace and war or about duty versus betrayal, if it was not explained by Lord Krishna at the beginning of a war, in the Mahabharata? That would have to be pure genius. It is the skill of a true writer. He builds up this great epic right up to war and it could just have been finished like that. At that very moment, Arjuna withdraws. And then and only then, does Maharishi Veda Vyas begin to unravel the greatest book of all times, the Bhagavad Gita. And we listen carefully, and read it again and again.

So did these stories within stories, people who enter a story and come up in another, and the manner in which ethics and principles are discussed, are the Puranas a form of documentation? Stories would be remembered and details would not be lost if the stories

were interesting. And if the stories were intertwined with human relations, of human concerns and of human faith in God and his godliness, the gaps could be filled up in explaining the choices between good and bad. Its hard to believe, but when one realizes that Maharishi Veda Vyas wrote 18,000 verses to write up the Srimad Bhagavatam, one has to accept the splendour of the writer. For, it is easy to write a long spun out story, but to write it out in verse-form, in a precise combination of words, and ensure that the metre and form is consistent, it really requires the penwork of a master.

What did Maharishi Veda Vyas want people to know and to learn from the Srimad Bhagavatam? He says in his introduction to the compilation that they are the ultimate source of knowledge. The Srimad Bhagavatam is meant to help us understand our relationship with God and godliness and thereby understand our duties towards achieving closeness with God. Does it mean that one would step away from worldliness, of current responsibilities and relationships? Not at all, according to Maharishi Veda Vyas. He clarifies that in understanding God and in our attempts to go closer to godliness, one achieves perfection and clarity in our

understanding of our role in humanity. It is in our achieving equanimity with other human beings that we go closer to God.

All this is quite complicated. How can one teach another human being on how to choose between the good and the bad and not get involved in their lives? How can one not make knowledgeable choices or teach human beings in simple exactitudes of understanding their problems and concerns? The Maharishi perfected the combination of his knowledge of reaching godliness and in his ability to let others know the path. Did he choose to explain it in Sanskrit? We will never know. Did he write out the verses in the exact words that we know of them in current times? We will perhaps never know. But they are out there. The words in Sanskrit, and the translations and the explanations by so many good people through the ages are with us. We know of the Srimad Bhagavatam because it exists.

We have our choices nowadays. Atheism also seems to work. Why have faith in God and godliness? Is God a villain who would strike down an atheist? Is God so particular that he would only wish to be prayed to through prayers, rituals and austerities? The Srimad

Bhagavatam is not meant to help us understand our individual choices in approaching God. The Maharishi has given us an opportunity to step up and understand. Many renditions exist in all the languages that we know of and those that lived during a period of time and are no longer used in the manner of modern languages. Pali and Ardhamagadhi were possibly languages that helped the spread of Bhagavad Gita and the Srimad Bhagavatam in new perspectives.

The Srimad Bhagavatam ultimately professes that we, as humans, have a duty to achieve perfection in our understanding of human society. It is not enough that we live as good individuals by ourselves. It is not enough that we live with our closest relatives as a good family. It is also not enough that we live with our friends and colleagues as a good group of people. We may be a good person, a good family person, a good friend or a good colleague and then we deny others their rights, their dignity and their choices in religion and values. That is not science. That is not an appropriate approach to life and its manner of living. The ability to achieve perfection in human society, to be able to provide equity and equanimity, is a science by itself. Science requires simple

perspectives – firstly, one needs to know how to achieve an objective, and secondly, to be able to achieve the objective again and again. Finally, science requires that the knowledge that an individual or a system possesses to achieve an objective can be similarly achieved by another individual, another society or another system in the same manner by using the same methods, and can achieve it again and again.

The manner of writing of stories and their purport in the Srimad Bhagavatam is such that by reading it once and again and again, will humanity be able to know God and godliness in close proximity, and be able to call out for help and blessings again and again. With the knowledge of Srimad Bhagavatam and its reading, human society would be able to sustain itself for eternity. Maharishi Veda Vyas knew that the power of the story would help continue the interest of those who read the Srimad Bhagavatam and would also be able to bring in others who would want to know more about the story. Did the Srimad Bhagavatam remain therefore solely the property of Hinduism? Was the Srimad Bhagavatam retained as the secret of Hinduism?

It is certainly not the property or secret of one religion. The knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita and the Srimad Bhagavatam has been seen to emerge from other religions and other schools of thought. It has certainly been at the forefront of argument within Hinduism, and there are several versions or approaches within Saivism or Vaisnavism that would require an entire lifetime to know and understand. In spite, and even with these diverse approaches, the strength of the Srimad Bhagavatam, must certainly have been as Maharishi Veda Vyas would have wanted it to be, to be available to human society as the science of transcendental godliness, forever.

Have humans changed since the Srimad Bhagavatam was written?

It would be correct to question if the Srimad Bhagavatam was able to change human behaviour since it was written, read, understood, analysed and taught to so many millions of people over the thousands of years. The Srimad Bhagavatam has been a source of knowledge to other great books, and has been quoted or hidden in

various forms in other religions and thought. So, did people change since the Srimad Bhagavatam was written? Do people change their behaviour and their approach to other human beings if they know what is good and bad, and how to choose truth over falsehood? Has human nature changed over these many thousands of years?

With more and more change over these many years, humans have not changed in their behaviour within themselves, to other humans and within human society. Understanding of law and order, of choosing the way society will be regulated, and of choosing their ruler, have been the changes that have come to stay with the hundreds of years. There is the Government of Uttar Pradesh in the land of Lord Ram and Ayodhya. There is the Government of Gujarat where Lord Krishna was at Dwaraka. These are governments where an understanding of human society has asked for and regulated social equity and social change. In this land of the Indus, the Yamuna, the Ganga and the Godavari, human engineering has been brought about in the understanding of the Bhagavad Gita by its leaders and beyond the Puranas.

We now recognize poverty as the biggest failure of human society. We also recognize that illiteracy is a stumbling block in fighting poverty. We fail to realize that our consolidation of human inequality over the hundreds of years, has sustained evil and hate and exploitation and distress within human society. We have brought about changes in technology and understanding of knowledge and literacy and understanding. Why are we not able to achieve all our successes in a manner that the poorest of the poor, the most backward, the biggest underachiever and the most deprived are not where they were, a decade ago, a century ago or a thousand years ago? There is but one aspect that the world cannot deny to the poor, to the deprived, to the backward of society. Humanity cannot deny them their choices. The world cannot deny them their power to choose, to be able to understand God and godliness, in any manner that they may wish to choose. This should be the biggest victory that modern day society has achieved as against medieval and ancient India.

The Srimad Bhagavatam explains that it is the ultimate source of knowledge. This is perhaps because Maharishi Veda Vyas had earlier written the Vedanta Sutra. Thereby, the Srimad

Bhagavatam, written later, had the advantage of also being able to meander into the Vedanta Sutra with the power of stories. The structure of the verses, within the various cantos, leads the student to understand the concept of godliness and perhaps, with faith and analysis and acceptance, reach to the state of God realization. How can one explain this state of understanding? Does one reach it at the end of the Srimad Bhagavatam? Then, why not go directly to the tenth canto, realize the conclusions that it may have drawn, and go about ones' life with the presumption that one has perhaps reached an understanding of godliness.

When would the reader be able to understand the achievement of having really understood the Srimad Bhagavatam? It would certainly not be by merely reading the tenth canto, but by reading the Srimad Bhagavatam from its first page, from the first verse, by really understanding the first canto, verse by verse, and then proceeding to the others in sequence. What humans have not been able to achieve over the thousands of years of their existence, of achieving an understanding of choices, every moment of their lives, of choices between good and bad, cannot be unturned. It needs deliberate thought. It needs deliberate action and intention. It

requires humanity to provide the understanding of Srimad Bhagavatam in a simplistic manner.

Why should one read the Srimad Bhagavatam? When does one discover the need to understand the Srimad Bhagavatam? How does one discover the Srimad Bhagavatam? There are actually many gateways to the Srimad Bhagavatam. The stories of the Srimad Bhagavatam are already known to human society outside the cantos and their verses. The Bhagavad Gita is known to many people and in many forms. Similarly, the Puranas are known across many stories and through their many heroes, villains and characters. It is however, only the Srimad Bhagavatam that places these stories in sequence and in perspective. The understanding grows and gets to be established in the succession of the verses within the cantos, and through their progression.

Modern day commentators of the Srimad Bhagavatam have understood and recognized the importance of understanding the verses in their proper sequence. Why would that be so important? Over the centuries of human civilization, while we have not understood the concept of a proper choice of good over evil, we

have also not denied ourselves our fallback on spirituality. We do get back to God when we are in distress. We get back to God or we discover God for the first times in our lives when we are in trouble. We hope that God would turn up suddenly and grant us those two to three boons that were granted to the heroes and villains of the Puranas from time to time. And when granted, we would be able to choose comfort over misery, good health over illnesses, return to life of those departed. And we fail, thus, in understanding the most ultimate of realizing the proximity to godliness.

Does one need to be a sadhu or a godman or a guru or a great philosopher to read, understand, analyse and internalize the Srimad Bhagavatam? Not at all. There is but only one requirement and that is to be able to read or listen. The best service that one can provide is to be able to read and explain the Srimad Bhagavatam to others. The better service in this path is to refrain from placing ones' own understanding or theories to the Srimad Bhagavatam. If there is a teacher out there, who would include his or her own hypotheses, then the path is not true. The only other requirement in understanding the Srimad Bhagavatam is to be a student.

For, as has been said many a time, it is only when the student is ready, will the teacher be able to introduce one to the Srimad Bhagavatam. What does one achieve at the end of the reading of the Srimad Bhagavatam? Does God come in front of the reader and appreciate the effort? That expectation would of course be the wrongful intention to begin reading the Srimad Bhagavatam. It is in the paradox that the achievement of being a human being with a better understanding of godliness that is paramount.

Why do we need to connect to God?

The Srimad Bhagavatam takes the reader and the student to understand Krishna from outside the Mahabharata and away from the Bhagavad Gita. It is essential that human society is able to understand the concept of Krishna and godliness as being one with the achievement of an understanding of going closer to God and the higher responsibility of humanity. How could this be possible? It is a cautious point to understand that this perspective would be exclusive to an understanding of Krishna as being beyond his integral role in the Mahabharata as the Krishna Avatara. Today, the world is in a fragile state of existence. At no other time, has the

world been threatened as it is now, and that is by looking even beyond human war and trauma.

This is the ultimate journey. One may climb the Everest, because it is there, and because it is the highest peak. The most expert mountaineer can conquer Mount Everest only with years of preparation and with the best of equipment. The best diver can go to the depths of the Pacific Ocean, and again this can only be achieved with years of preparation and with the best of equipment. There are tens of thousands or at least a million and more people out in the world, seeking God to the exclusion of their own lives and responsibilities. The Srimad Bhagavatam provides the reader with the ultimate journey with the shortest distance. The achievement of a realization of God, at least the beginning of this journey, is to be first begun, within ones' mind.

The tenth canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam introduces transcendental aspects of Krishna. Can one understand the panorama by a mere reading of the verses? Does one not need to conduct austerities to understand and reach Krishna? How can this be possible? Answers to all these questions can only be achieved

within one's own mind. This is the ultimate journey. The journey within one's mind, to understanding God and godliness, of understanding humanity and spirituality, of a world without any horizons, is of a movement from one point of knowledge to the very same point of knowledge. For what we know of the universe, of its purpose, of its dynamism and diversity, and of what we know of this world, and what we know of God, is but not even the proverbial speck of sand.

The journey across the nine cantos, and then the tenth canto, wherein the understanding of the transcendental aspects of Krishna is presented, and the further journey through the eleventh and twelfth canto is the ultimate of travel, if one stops to explore the verses within one's mind. Can one ever understand the Srimad Bhagavatam in its entirety? Has someone actually been able to achieve the understanding? It is perhaps the truism that those who would have gone far far ahead in this journey would perhaps be the first to admit that they are yet to learn the Srimad Bhagavatam even as a précis. It is the understanding that one could not learn the transcendental nature of Krishna without immersion in the splendid

ocean of realization of godliness that one understands the relative concept of knowledge, understanding and acceptance.

What do I hope to achieve? Do I presume that I would be able to understand the Srimad Bhagavatam? Do I presume that I would be able to go beyond at least the first canto? I do not know at this moment. I think the best way to find out what I would be able to struggle with, and whether I would be able to proceed, is to begin. Each one of us is different and each one of us has much to achieve in life, with others, with human society, with humanity and with spirituality. I am always told that to be spiritual is to be irrational. I am also advised that to be spiritual is to be denying scientific thought and understanding. I feel that I am privileged when people criticize me for my intent to delve into this vast ocean. I realize that I have begun on the journey when people criticize me for being irrational or abstract. At least, those who criticize me or advise me, have begun to realize that perhaps I have strayed from their idea of another journey.

I write these pages for myself. I am selfish in that aspect. I am not attempting to teach anyone else. I will however try to keep writing.

I seek blessings in that aspect from that great writer of words, that great storyteller, the best of the best, Maharishi Veda Vyas. Can any other writer of stories, can any other teacher of philosophy, and can any other preacher of spiritual thought ever be able to go beyond the scope and amazing worlds that he has introduced to us? We know that Krishna explained the good from the bad to Arjuna, and that the Pandavas defeated the Kauravas, but it was Maharishi Veda Vyas who wrote it up. I seek blessings from him.

The world over today, humanity has presumed that it could solve its problems without seeking guidance from spirituality. Over the centuries, this land of India has seen several upturns from changeovers and conquests and war and resettlements. The people of India have also been guided at various times with enlightened souls who have been able to develop new approaches to God and godliness. The amazing manner of acceptance amongst the people of the Indian subcontinent has resulted in the birth of several religions, and they have in turn multiplied within themselves. The land of India has also witnessed the tragedies of communities, cities and peoples fighting among themselves. There is never a more critical moment in the growth of spiritual thought than one

needs to understand humanity, spirituality and achieve the realization of godliness.

Will human civilization change because of ethics?

The easiest manner of criticism of any search within the Srimad Bhagavatam or the other Puranas by the Scientist or the Atheist is to say that it is irrational. By denying the Whole, they also deny the Pure. What do I mean by this? The purpose of Maharishi Veda Vyas was, I feel, to use the stories as a vehicle, to carry the greater purpose of explaining ethics and principles of humanity to reach godliness. Should humanity reach godliness? There is a reason why the great Maharishi tended to attach gods and god-like characters to human characters in the Puranas. He must have felt the need to deny any scope for argument if good is good, and evil is evil. Would you argue with the gods if it were said that such and such perspective is true and good?

It was a world without computers and the Internet, I would repeat. It was a world without books made of paper, without printing

presses and without facsimile or Photostat machines. Palm leaves had to be depended upon to ensure retention of thought, memory and intent. How much could you write on a single palm leaf? Even today, as we learn of adult pedagogy, and of the short retention of memory of knowledge-seeking adults, we are told that the attention span is probably eight to twenty minutes. What would be a better means of conveying the idea within tightly composed set of words that would rhyme, within a pre-determined metre on a single palm leaf? Maharishi Veda Vyas set out to achieve this impossibility and he did this for 18,000 verses. And he did that with complete mastery. If you would compare the Nobel laureates for literature, it is my personal opinion that you would need to establish a higher league of achievement to even consider the great Maharishi.

The splendour of the stories and the mystical and magical nature of the characters are seen and appreciated by those who understand what the great Maharishi hoped to achieve. The aspect of the diversity of ethics and principles explained through the Srimad Bhagavatam and the Puranas and as explained through the many centuries by the greats who read it and understood it, can only be understood by those who are able to, and one can learn from them.

From Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, to Sant Kabir to modern day Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, there are many who have helped us understand the path and have helped us go forward. There have also been others like Chanakya who understood the merits of war against pacifist acceptance. There are others like Sant Tukaram or Dnyaneshwar and other great bhakti souls who have made the Srimad Bhagavatam simpler to understand.

Has humanity been able to learn from the ethics taught by the Srimad Bhagavatam? This is something that I am looking forward to read and understand from the cantos of the treatise. What is it that we could not learn from it? Was it difficult to understand? Was it difficult to learn? Was it difficult to explain? Was it difficult to teach? Were humans not able to teach or learn or explain properly? I fear that each time a great soul went about trying to explain ethics and principles of living, we went about creating schisms. We went about following the great soul as a saint and established rituals rather than understand the teaching. We also went about creating and fighting wars and did not focus on abolishing poverty and thereby not abolishing diseases and inequality among peoples and communities and nations.

The Srimad Bhagavatam, as written by Maharishi Veda Vyas, introduces us to the concept of the unlimited Supreme Lord. Why would such a mode of godliness be required? How did the great Maharishi get to understand the concept and how did he manage to convey it? I look forward to learning about it and trying to understand the mastery of the writer and the teacher. I am looking forward to an amazing journey within the verses and the cantos. We already know that this is an amazing epitome of literature. We already know that the Maharishi has said that the Srimad Bhagavatam will bring about changes in our perspectives as we go about it and as we go about our regular lives. He was a Maharishi, but he did not want each recipient of the knowledge of the Srimad Bhagavatam to go about becoming a rishi.

How do you explain that humanity is supposed to be honest? How do you convince people that they should not exploit other people? How are communities supposed to stay pure in their thought and purpose and practice? These are difficult concepts. Knowing what has happened in medieval, ancient and modern worlds, and knowing the hate and mistrust, war and tragedies that have

enveloped humanity, it is indeed difficult that one treatise could perhaps have shown the way if it was read and understood and disseminated? Many authors down the centuries have identified the Sanskrit language to be the culprit. It could be true. However, other authors have been able to translate the Srimad Bhagavatam in regional languages and trans-regional languages. These translated versions have also been popularly accepted.

I think one would not be able to arrive at conclusions right now. I doubt if we could actually arrive at conclusions. I am only preparing for the journey. I want to commit myself to the journey and to help others know about it along the way. Stay with me. It may take days, months, years or decades. The world as we know it will change faster while I attempt an understanding, than it has changed the way it has done over the years since the Srimad Bhagavatam was conveyed by the great Maharishi Veda Vyas. Some years from now, the Internet would be a different place. The world will be a different place.

It is important to know why the world has not been able to become better in the behaviour of humanity within itself and to other living

beings. It is also important to know why humans are not able to take care of their habitat. It is crucial to know why human beings are not able to accept that other living beings are co-inhabitants of this planet. The Earth is the ultimate Ark. We do not want to have to live through another deluge. The Srimad Bhagavatam will perhaps have answers because it would discuss the various avatars of the Supreme Lord, of the scope of God and godliness. Would humanity be closer to God if we were able to conserve nature in a better and more holistic manner? Or would it be merely enough to not speak the untruth? I presume it would be more and more complex in our required duties to each other, to humanity, to our intrinsic values and to other living beings. I am certain, at this moment, that the great Maharishi Veda Vyas would require of humanity to respect this World, our land, our waters, our climate, other living beings, our fellow humans and also ensure that we conduct ourselves well in this duty.

I did not struggle to write this text...

It was the most amazing experience in writing these pages. I did not have to struggle to write them at all. At most times, I have terrible writers' block, and I find it very extremely difficult to start writing, if at all. There are many stories and manuscripts that I have begun and never completed. Those closest to me are always complaining that I have never completed a plot. I did not have any such trouble writing out these pages.

The words seemed to come out by themselves. It was indeed an amazing experience and a most pleasant one. I had to simply sit in front of the computer, and keep my fingers over the keyboard, and they simply went by their job. My only task was to keep reading the text as it came out and ensure that there were no spelling errors or contextual logjams. And there were none. I did not have to get about to reading other texts or other pages. In these times of 'cut and paste' and of referring to Wikipedia and to Googling out anything that has been written on anything ever, I found it most surprising that I did not have to do so.

With the blessings of the great Maharishi Veda Vyas, the best author ever, I hope to proceed. I seek his blessings and yours.

Bharat Bhushan
23 August 2009, Ganesh Chaturthi

Please do convey your feedback and comments –
Email: bharatbhushan@yahoo.com or, at the blog-pages at
<http://srimad-bhagavat.blogspot.com>

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Many great thinkers and souls have written about the Srimad Bhagavatam and have presented it for humanity

This document is indebted to their abilities.